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REVIEWS

Victor Hugo, Ruy Blas, edited by H. L. HUTTON. Oxford at the Clarendon Press, 1919. 316 pp.

Molière, l'École des femmes, edited by HÉLÈNE HARVITT. New York, Oxford University Press, 1919. xxvi + 146 pp.

The first of these volumes gives evidence of careful work, not only in the text and notes, but in the introduction, where an unusual amount of attention is paid to the dramatic significance of various portions of the play. It will be helpful to teachers who know little of the theater, though the unnecessary detail into which the notes are carried will often discourage, rather than assist the student.¹ The book's chief fault lies elsewhere. If we were to have a new edition of *Ruy Blas* after the satisfactory college text published by Professor McKenzie in 1909, which Mr. Hutton does not mention, or even the older edition by Professor Garner, with which he is acquainted, it should have been in order to give students the results of the latest scholarly investigations. Unfortunately Mr. Hutton and his collaborator, Mr. Parry, have made use of nothing published in France during the last fourteen years. They neglect the very important articles by Rigal and Lanson in the *Revue d'histoire littéraire de la France*,² a journal that should be in the hands of anyone who undertakes to publish a modern French text. Had Mr. Hutton read the first of these articles, he would not have confined himself, in studying the sources of the play, to Mme d'Aulnoy, Vayrac, Lesage, and Bulwer, whose relations to the tragedy have been discussed by Morel-Fatio, Biré, and others. He

¹ So simple a construction as *lui continue de rêver* should be left for explanation to the teacher. Certainly it does not deserve ten lines in the notes (p. 280). Such comment as that the word *godelureaux* is found in *le Gendre de Monsieur Poirier* (p. 242) is superfluous, while the remark (*ibid.*) that a comparison is drawn in *Gil Blas* between an abandoned wife and Penelope is positively misleading, for it implies that Hugo needed the guidance of Lesage to arrive at this literary commonplace.

² Vol. xx (1913), pp. 753-788, *la Genèse d'un drame romantique: "Ruy Blas,"* and vol. xxii (1915), pp. 392-401, *Victor Hugo et Angelica Kauffmann*.

would have learned of the influence of Gaillardet's *Struensée ou le médecin de la reine* (1833) on the portion of the play that concerns the relations between the queen, Ruy Blas, and the nobles, as well as Hugo's indebtedness for much of his fourth act to the farcical trilogy of M. de P——y (Pompigny?). If he had known Lanson's article, he would have seen that the account of Angelica Kauffmann's marriage to a Swedish adventurer, easily accessible to Hugo, is far more likely to have been the source of his intrigue than the *Lady of Lyons*, with which it was difficult for him to be acquainted. Had he read still more widely, he would have perceived the structural importance of the third act, which, according to Hugo, contains the germ of the tragedy, as I pointed out in *Modern Philology* nearly three years ago.³

P. 8. It is misleading to say that the first three scenes of *Polyeucte* exemplify the introduction of comedy into tragedy. Pp. 15 and 240. Hugo is twice taken to task for having Ruy Blas wear in the second act the lace which he had worn as a lackey and by which the queen identifies him, although Hugo nowhere states that he wore this lace while still a lackey. All we know is that he wore it when he hurt his hand, not necessarily more than three days before the second act begins and probably some time after he had given up his livery, which he does in the course of the first act. P. 18. The editor describes the hero's love as "pure of sensual emotion," yet Ruy Blas faints at the thought of admitting the king to the queen's bedroom. P. 28. Mr. Hutton is not, as he implies, the first writer to note the dramatic importance of Casilda's plan for enabling the queen to leave the palace.⁴ P. 263. It would be better to translate *pourpre*, as McKenzie does, by royal purple, than merely to refer to the occurrence of the word in *Hernani*. P. 270. It is inexact to say that Crispin was introduced into French comedy by Poisson about 1654, for the first character so called in the plays of this author is the Crispin of his *Baron de la Crasse*, played for the first time on July 14, 1662. P. 275. "*Ouïr*: archaic; now used in a few set phrases: 'daignez ouïr nos vœux,' 'j'ai ouï dire.'" These phrases are obsolete. P. 276. "*C'est fort*, 'it's too bad!'" The meaning is nearer McKenzie's translation, "it's extraordinary," though this is, of course, too elegant. P. 280. *A maison borgne*

³ Vol. xiv, pp. 641-646, "The Genesis of *Ruy Blas*."

⁴ Cf. *R H L*, vol. xx, p. 785.

is less respectable than a "shabby-looking" house. Indeed it is less respectable than a *maison louche*, a fact that the editor fails to perceive.

There is a more general criticism that may be made of this, as of other college texts. Why does a man who, if writing a scholarly article, would be careful to mention his indebtedness to earlier writers, fail to do so when he edits a text book? One does not expect references to authorities for interpretations that depend only on general knowledge, but when, for instance, Garner notes that the application to the Virgin of the term *stella maris* is first made by St. Bernard,⁵ cites Prescott for instances of Spanish horses shod with silver, or the Prince de Joinville to explain how Hugo coined the word *trognonne*,⁶ the earlier editor deserves more from his successor than a simple listing of his book in the bibliography. I do not mean to imply that Mr. Hutton's scholarship lacks independence. On the contrary, he shows far more than most editors of texts. He has in the cases I have cited adopted a system that is in fairly general use, one that must be given up, if the editing of texts for schools and colleges is to attract our best scholarship.

Unlike Mr. Hutton, Dr. Harvitt knows where to go for recent bibliographical information and how to be concise. She has not attempted to better the standard text of the *École des femmes*, nor to add to scholarly opinion concerning it, but she has devoted herself to preparing a useful edition of the play for English-speaking students, a thing that has not been attempted since Saintsbury's edition appeared in 1888. The text of the *Grands Écrivains* edition is carefully reproduced. To the important notes there found are added others based on more recent scholarship, notably in the case of the sources of the *Maximes du mariage*. The introduction is meagre. The sketch of Molière's life contains barely more than an incomplete list of his plays. Little is said of his family and his relations with Louis XIV, nothing at all of the

⁵ A statement that is incorrect, as Dr. Blondheim has pointed out to me, for the expression goes back to St. Jerome. He wrote *stilla*, which must have been taken for *stella* long before St. Bernard. Cf. Herzog-Hauck, *Realencyklopädie für protestantische Theologie und Kirche*, Leipzig, 1903, vol. XII, p. 310.

⁶ Cf. the notes on lines 789, 899, and 1946 in both editions.

difficulties of his first theatrical venture, his acquaintance with Racine, the circumstances of his death. What is more serious, no effort is made to point out his importance in the history of the French stage and of universal comedy. The play receives more attention than its author, but not enough. The brief comment published after the title of each work listed in the bibliography does not take the place of a comprehensive résumé of critical judgments. A teacher who feels the need of a more ample introduction may well prefer to use Saintsbury's edition.

P. vii. A student may be led by the order of the sentences to believe that Molière lost his father between the time that he studied law and the founding of the *Illustre Théâtre*. P. x. Instead of merely stating the play's relationship to Italian masques and mediæval French farces, the editor should have pointed out in what respect it resembles each of these types. P. xii. The "recurrence of the same series of events" is not the only comic element in the play. P. xiii. Some mention should be made of the relationship existing between this play and the *École des maris*. P. xiv. "Before *l'École des femmes*, the right of comedy was not yet acknowledged to handle the serious aspects of vital questions"; but the *École des maris* and to a certain extent the *Précieuses* had already established this right. P. xv. The editor gives a list of properties reproduced incompletely from the one given by the decorator, Laurent, which is itself incomplete. It would have been more interesting to give Laurent's account of the scenery, "deux maisons sur le devant et le reste une place de ville."

Pp. 111 and 131. As the notes that refer to the prose portions of the text, the *épître*, *préface*, and *lettre d'Agnès*, are without numbers, one cannot tell at a glance to what line each refers. P. 112. "There is no other example in Molière of the phrase *dans demain*"; it may be of interest to learn that this construction, overlooked by Haase and Livet, does exist elsewhere in the seventeenth century, if not in Molière, in two of Hardy's plays, *Mariamne*, act iv, scene 2, and *Coriolan*, act i, scene 2, examples which confirm the translation given by the editor, "no later than tomorrow." P. 114. The editor follows the explanation given by Voltaire and Despois when she affirms that Molière's enemies objected to *tarte à la crème* since "one should not use such common words," an explanation that is unsatisfactory because there was no

general idea at the time that comedy required a *style noble*. The phrase should probably be classed with others which were criticized by Molière's rivals and to which an objection can more easily be understood, the *potage*, the *le-*, and the *enfants par l'oreille*. P. 124. There is no need for representing Molière as "unintentionally and unconsciously" incorporating lines from *Sertorius* into his play. He was quite capable of purposely parodying a play written by Corneille and represented by a rival troop. P. 125. Neither "frills," nor "puffing" is a satisfactory translation of *canons*. P. 130. *Et* is translated "besides," "from the first." It cannot mean the latter, for *d'abord* follows in the same line. I should prefer "for" to either of them, not an unusual meaning of *et* in Molière.⁷ P. 143. The translation of *morveux* by "good-for-nothing" does not indicate the youth of a person so described.

The editor sometimes notes departures from modern usage in orthography and order of words, but there are many instances in which she fails to do so.⁸ In lines 173, 4, the rime should be explained; in line 250, the hiatus noted. The importance of lines 272-276 in preparing the dénouement should be indicated. In line 746 *un peu* should be translated; 1056, the pun noted; 1058, the gender of *dot* commented upon; 1059, the departure from modern usage in *lorsque l'on le voit* pointed out. A few typographical errors occur. For *Cresse*, p. vii, read *Cressé*; for *fois*, p. 122, *foi*; for 1243, before *un monstre*, p. 138, read 1242; for 3 on the first line of p. 116 read 2. Finally, we may thank Dr. Harvitt for the two quaint illustrations she has published with her book, a portrait of Molière as Arnolphe and one of Mlle de Brie as Agnès.⁹

H. CARRINGTON LANCASTER.

⁷ Cf. Livet, *Lexique*, vol. II, p. 266.

⁸ Cf. lines 146, 688, 1023, 1030, 1709, etc.

⁹ Dr. Harvitt has furnished the following list of *errata* and corrections, which, through some misunderstanding was not used by her publishers: p. 50, title, *ou* should appear in characters of the same size as the rest of the line; p. 52, lines 796 *et seq.* should be on a vertical line with l. 795; p. 58, l. 901, no punctuation after *jamais*; p. 64, l. 1013, none after *fait*; l. 1015, a comma after *voir*; p. 70, l. 1108, a period after *sot*; p. 81, l. 1314, no punctuation after *biens*; p. 111, omit the first definition of *si peu fait à*; p. 118, l. 239, this definition should appear under l. 240 and *vice versa*; p. 128, l. 773 and l. 782, substitute for the definitions given "of an amorous